

**Weekly Situation Report**  
**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)**  
**April 15, 2003**  
**From: Billy Causey**

**HOT TOPICS AND HEADS UP:**

An 85-foot shrimp vessel grounded on Conch Reef on April 13, 2003 in the Upper Keys. Upper region staff conducted an injury assessment and determined there was little to no resource damage.

Sanctuary FWC Officers aboard Pt. Monroe responded to a mayday call in the Dry Tortugas on 11 April and saved two crew members and a dog from a burning shrimp vessel. The vessel was towed out of FKNMS waters and finally burned to the water line and sank in approximately 100 feet of water. USCG Cutter Key Largo rendezvoused with the Pt. Monroe and transported the crew back to safety.

The Sanctuary Advisory Council met in regular session on April 8, 2003. In addition to reports from the Sanctuary Superintendent, FWC Law Enforcement, the FDEP, and FMRI, presentations were given on topics covering spiny lobster populations and commercial viewing of dolphins in the wild. Public comments focused mainly on marine mammal strandings, and several proposed resolutions were adopted. Russell Reardon presented a power point presentation and presented video of the salvage of the sunken shrimp vessel "Done Deal" in the Tortugas. The successful salvage of this derelict vessel is in part due to cooperative efforts between the FKNMS, Monroe County, and the National Park Service. In the afternoon, Superintendent Billy Causey and staff led a group of SAC members and invited guests on a snorkeling trip to Looe Key to observe the re-establishment of elkhorn coral in the western back reef.

Billy Causey is in San Diego on April 14-15 to give a presentation at an interdisciplinary joint conference of the George Wright Society and the National Park Service entitled Protecting Our Diverse Heritage: The Role of Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites.

On April 16, at the Joint Conference on the Science and Restoration of the Greater Everglades and Florida Bay Ecosystem in Palm Harbor, Florida, Billy will present an opening talk for the Keys session on the topic of using science to help address management needs

On April 22, Billy Causey will attend the the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation/Mote Marine Laboratory Earth Day celebration at the Mote Aquarium in Sarasota, Florida.

On April 24, Billy has been requested by the Harte Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies to speak as the spring Harte Distinguished Lecturer, at Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi, Texas.

During the week of April 14th, Science Coordinator Brian Keller and SAC Liaison Fiona Wilmot are attending the Joint Conference on the Science and Restoration of the Greater Everglades and Florida Bay Ecosystem in Palm Harbor, FL. Brian is moderating a Florida Bay session and an Everglades session on marine ecosystems of the Florida Keys.

Lower Region Assistant Manager, LT Robert Kamphaus, returned to the Key West office on 14 April after a month away. LT Kamphaus attended NOAA's Science of Oil Spills (SOS) Training in Seattle from 17 - 21 March. After a week off, he traveled to the Gulf of the Farallones NMS office in San Francisco for a two-week assignment (31 March - 11 April). While there, Robert assisted GFNMS staff with: beginning the process to establish a NOAA Corps billet for the site, reviewing enforcement relationships, and investigating options for a Tomales Bay mooring plan. The temporary assignment provided an excellent opportunity for the exchange of ideas and procedures between sites.

John Halas and Steve Baumgartner are in San Andres, Colombia assisting resource managers to design and implement a mooring buoy system in that region.

Fish counts were conducted at the Adolphus Busch artificial reef and Looe Key intermediate reef. Conditions were marginal and visibility was worse, however staff persevered and completed the task. The mooring buoy team took the opportunity to replace the fishing buoy on the Bush in between dives.

The Florida Keys Community College held its annual Underwater Easter Egg Hunt and a Dive Expo. Anne McCarthy participated in the event but won no prize due to bag lent to her by her coworker Cheva Heck had two large holes in it (discovered after depositing at least 15 eggs in it and returning to the surface with merely 4).

FKNMS will set up an educational/information booth at the University of Miami's Earth Day Celebration to be held on the main campus on April 16. Education Specialist Nancy Diersing will be representing the Sanctuary at this event.

The Lower Region plans to hold a special staff meeting on Friday, April 18, 2003 at Fort Zachary Taylor state park (or alternatively at the Navy Base) and hold a team picnic.

Lower Region Team OCEAN coordinator John Nazzaro attended the St. Pete Marine quest at FMRI on April 5th. A children's booth was featured where approximately 350 buttons of marine critters were made and distributed. In addition, information cards with critter facts and tips on what you can do to help protect them were passed out.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS/AWARDS:**

Karla Mendez was awarded Team Member of the Year for the FKNMS. She was presented this award at the SAC meeting which was well attended by many well wishing staff.

### **COMMUNITY EVENTS:**

John Nazzaro and Alicia Stevenson held an information booth at the Earth Day events on April 12, 2003 at Bahia Honda State Park. The event was well attended with school kids dominating the demographics.

Students from Plantation Key School will be participating in a field trip to Windley Key State Geological Site in the Florida Keys. As part of this field experience, students will learn about keys geology from Sanctuary Program Assistant Steve Werndli. Students will also learn about coral reef ecology through a series of hands-on activities conducted by Education Specialist Nancy Diersing. Funds for the field trip are provided by the Teacher Awards Program administered by the Sanctuary education program.

### **CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

Nothing to report.

### **PRESS – MEDIA ISSUES:**

“Sanctuary to weigh in on Glades,” The Key West Citizen, April 8, 2003

NBC 6, WTVJ Miami aired story on Sanctuary officers shrimp boat fire rescue at 5:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. and made the story available over the affiliate feed. Coverage arranged by Cheva Heck, Thursday, April 10, 2003

“Dolphin tour operators ask for federal rules,” the Key West Citizen, regarding Sanctuary Advisory Council presentation on issues with growing number of dolphin tour operators in the Lower Keys, Friday, April 11, 2003, The Key West Citizen.

“Lawmakers: Extend ‘Glades pollution deadline,’ Florida Keys Keynoter,” Saturday, April 12, 2003, regarding Sanctuary Advisory Council vote on Florida legislature bill to relax Everglades pollution standards.

“Boat burns, but FWC saves crew and dog,” Florida Keys Keynoter, Saturday, April 12, 2003, regarding Sanctuary officers shrimp boat rescue fire

“Sleek ‘Canada’ lures with history.” Florida Keys Keynoter, Saturday, April 12, 2003, regarding NOAA, NURC, East Carolina University partnership on Queen of Nassau archaeological surveys.

“FWC rescues boaters in two incidents,” The Key West Citizen, Sunday, April 13, 2003, regarding Sanctuary officers shrimp boat fire rescue

Cheva Heck discussed SAC meeting resolutions and shrimp boat fire rescue on US 1 Radio’s “Morning Magazine,” Monday, April 14, 2003

Cheva Heck prepared pitch letter for TV show “Let’s Go Diving,” planning to film in the Florida Keys this summer

Cheva Heck working on pitch letter for research-oriented shows for local freelance producer for National Geographic Today and PBS kids show Dragonfly

Cheva Heck prepared draft, pictures and web sites for "Progression of Protection in the Florida Keys" article for NOAA Magazine.